
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 April 2021

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/D/20/3260784

The Gables, 27 Longdown Lane North, Ewell KT17 3HY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Andy Spinks against the decision of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00995/FLH, dated 16 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as erection of first floor side extension set back front facade of house and down in height compared to height of existing dwelling. Installation of Juliet balcony to existing rear dormer and creation of pitched roof over existing rear dormer
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The decision notice makes reference to the 'Higher Green/Longdown Lane North Conservation Area'. However, based on the map with which I have been provided, the appeal property lies within the Higher Green Conservation Area. (the Conservation Area). I have therefore considered the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Insofar as it is relevant to the appeal, the significance of the Conservation Area resides in the planned layout of predominantly inter-war detached suburban housing it contains. This consists of an attractive range of mostly hipped building forms in often repeating designs.
5. 27 Longdown Lane North is a detached inter-war dwelling, which stands on a spacious plot with an open frontage. This, and the siting of the dwelling at a higher level than the highway, mean that it is both prominent and clearly visible within the streetscene. Its original design comprises a symmetrical hipped building form of three bays. This consists of two forward projecting gables of equal width at either end of the frontage, and a central section of narrower width. Though the integrity of the original design has been undermined by installation of plastic windows, its original character remains

- clearly discernible. In view of the above, the building makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.
6. The scheme would entail the addition of a first-floor side extension, and modifications to windows within the rear elevation. The latter are apparently already subject of approval, and on that basis could be modified whether the appeal was allowed or not. In this regard the Council's concern specifically relates to the effects of the proposed extension when viewed from the front.
 7. The width of the extension would exceed that of the gabled bays. As such it would neither reflect the proportions of the original building form, nor appear as a clearly subservient addition to it. The resulting conflict would be emphasised by the fact that the ridgeline of the extension would adjoin the roof of the original building at a point above the ridgeline of the gables. It would be further accentuated by the substantial roof area of the extension viewed relative to that of the original building.
 8. It is obvious that any first floor side extension would upset the symmetry of the frontage. In this case however, the imbalance caused by the size and poor level of integration of the extension would be significant, and the visual identity of the original building form would be obscured. In each regard harm would be caused.
 9. The extension would be stepped back from the main façade. Given that the ground floor would remain flush with the frontage, the effect of stepping back as a means of indicating subservience would however be limited. Moreover, it would make little difference to the harm identified above.
 10. Proposals for an extension of different design were previously dismissed at appeal. The current scheme has sought to respond to the findings of the Inspector in that appeal, together with generic design guidance produced by the Council. Indeed, the extension now proposed differs overall from the previous design, principally in terms of being of smaller scale, in being stepped back, and in featuring a lower ridgeline. Be that as it may, it remains unacceptable for the reasons set out above.
 11. The appellants have drawn attention to the past extension of 21a Longdown Lane North. However, as this is a relatively modern dwelling, whose design is different to that of No 27, it holds little direct relevance to the merits of the appeal scheme. It does not therefore alter my findings above.
 12. As a whole, the scheme would not complement the design of the original building and would in turn harm the contribution that it makes to the significance of the Conservation Area. The harm caused in this case would be less than substantial. I attach considerable importance and weight to this harm. In accordance with paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework, it is necessary for this harm to be balanced against the public benefits of the scheme.
 13. The scheme would provide expanded accommodation for the appellants. However, notwithstanding the 'limited positive weight' attached to this benefit by the Council, it would be a private rather than a public benefit. As such does not attract any weight.
 14. The scheme would generate building work. However, given the very small scale of the scheme, any broader economic benefits would be negligible. As such

they attract negligible weight. Consequently, the public benefits of the scheme would be insufficient to outweigh the harm that it would cause.

15. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. As such it would conflict with Policies DM8 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015 (the DMP), which seek to secure this objective, and Policy DM10 of the DMP which more generally seeks to secure high quality design.

Conclusion

16. The scheme conflicts with the development plan and would cause unacceptable harm to the Conservation Area. There are no other considerations which alter or outweigh these findings. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR